



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

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**Testimony of Deborah J. Fuller  
Judiciary Committee  
March 26, 2009**

**House Bill 6702, An Act Concerning Public Access to Proceedings in  
Certain Juvenile Matters**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony, on behalf of the Judicial Branch, on *House Bill 6702, An Act Concerning Public Access to Proceedings in Certain Juvenile Matters*. The Judicial Branch has some concerns with this bill.

While there may be a good public policy reason to open certain juvenile proceedings to the public, this bill would not accomplish that goal in a workable fashion. As drafted, it would place an enormous burden on our juvenile courts and the judges who preside over those cases. We believe that the issue of whether our juvenile courts should be open needs further discussion and should be the subject of an in-depth study.

Some specific issues with the bill are:

- The standards for determining when a courtroom should be closed do not comport with those that are in place in the Practice Book for closing all other Connecticut court proceedings and thus may present constitutional issues;
- The concept of a pilot program raises equal protection issues;
- We could not implement a pilot program in two of our busiest courts;
- Allowing access to juvenile records may violate federal law and thus jeopardize federal funding.

We would respectfully suggest that further research into what has happened in the other states that have opened their juvenile courts, including an evaluation of outcomes, is needed before Connecticut decides whether to make this significant change.

Thank you for your consideration.